

WGMC VISION, MISSION AND IDENTITY

Who are we? - Core identity

We are a community of Mennonites, seeking to worship God, follow Jesus and to embody the teaching and gospel of Jesus as informed by the Anabaptist tradition. Peace and justice are at the heart of who we are, because peace and justice are at the heart of what we have found to be good and true in Jesus' life and teachings. We seek to express our community life together in simplicity of lifestyle, in collective decision-making and in patterns of community life that appreciate the gifts of all. We value searching questions and mutual accountability and encouragement as we seek to work out together how to live as disciples of Jesus. We recognise our need for the grace, healing and transformation that God offers us as individuals and as a community, and through us to others. Church members are covenanted to God and each other through our church covenant.

What are we here for?

We are here to be a community of disciples of Jesus that

- is church in distinctively Anabaptist ways, in particular (but not exclusively) as expressed in our church covenant.
- teaches and authentically embodies the values which we claim and lives out the gospel of Jesus and his concern for social justice, peace and reconciliation.
- allows space for people to ask questions and think things through
- attracts, affirms and includes those who are drawn to us as we are this community

Recognising Jesus' particular concern for those who are poor, marginalised and oppressed by society, we are here

- to support and empower those members of the church community who in their individual lives engage in diverse ways with those who need social justice
- to work together practically and theologically in areas where we can use our skills alongside those struggling for social justice
- to seek out this engagement if it does not arise naturally out of our location or the make up of our community

Who is our neighbour?

Our neighbour is the person who wants to join us, because he or she feels that in finding us that they have come home. This is the person who is

attracted when we most authentically reflect a focus on Jesus' teaching as expressed in Anabaptist convictions and values. These people include

- those drawn to community of the type that we create
- those who share a concern for peace and justice
- North American Mennonites
- Christians looking for a more authentic discipleship, who have begun working through issues we care about but have not found a church setting in which they can take this further
- those seeking to grow into a broader spirituality
- people without faith but who have values in common with us

To attract these people we need authentically to be the community that embodies the values which we claim and to live out Jesus' concern for social justice. We need to develop ways in which they will be able to hear about and get to know us. We need to be both willing to stay small and willing to grow.

This understanding of "who is our neighbour?" includes reaching out to and engaging with those we encounter, as individuals and a community, in particular those who are in need of social justice. Our community life should

- support and empower its members in engaging with people who need social justice
- enable us to respond as a group to specific situations

Finally, the understanding of "who is our neighbour?" also includes the recognition that our neighbour is whoever God brings to us or brings us to, and as such we can never entirely define the answer to the question. We need to seek to be open to the God of surprises working among us.

Our location should facilitate two aims, which may be in tension

- being accessible and visible to people who might be drawn to join us
- encountering people who need our skills in their struggle for social justice

If these are mutually exclusive, we may need to have a programme which facilitates encounters with people whom we might help to find social justice, for instance through engaging as a church with one campaign or service issue.